

Sunday Sermon: December 10, 2017

Sermon Theme: The Prophecies Prepare us for Jesus to Come

Sermon Text: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² *Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.*

³ *A voice of one calling in the desert, "Prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.*

⁴ *Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.*

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶ *A voice says, "Cry out."*

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ *The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them.*

Surely the people are grass.

⁸ *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."*

⁹ *You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain.*

You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

¹⁰ *See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him.*

See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

Why do we watch the weather in Las Vegas? For most of the year, there is really not a whole lot of reason to. We really don't watch the weather to see any change in the weather, we watch it merely to know when the hot will turn hotter and the dry will get drier.

Even though it may not be much for us, there are places where people need an accurate forecast in order to be prepared for what might come at them during the day. With satellite images, Doppler radars, and enhanced technology meteorologists have all the tools in their hands to tell us what is going to happen and they are usually right when they give the forecast.

People want an accurate forecast in order to be prepared for the day and to be able to plan for it. We might need an umbrella or a coat if the meteorologist says so. We can plan the hike when it is not too hot. We can plan the Christmas decorating when it is not too windy. With this forecast in hand we can be prepared and make plans.

Watching the weather is one of the times of life where we gather information so that we're prepared. But the most important place to be prepared is with God's Word. God has given to us many rich prophecies in the Old Testament. These prophecies are meant to be looked at and read over and over again. God wants these signs to be fresh in our minds so that we will be prepared for what is **going to happen with our salvation**.

Advent is a time when we look at some of the specific OT prophecies about Jesus. God gave these signs about Jesus to tell us exactly who he would be and what he would do for us so that we would be prepared for him to come. This morning we look at the prophecy that was quoted in our Gospel this morning: Isaiah 40: 1-11.

Just as we look at the forecast so that we are prepared for whatever weather comes, this morning we will look at this prophecy and we will see how God prepares us for Jesus to come by telling us all the things he will bring with him.

1-2

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

What does the child want when they run up to their mother with a bloody knee and tears running down their face? They don't want an, "I told you so," they don't want a lesson on listening the first time, they don't want to sit in a chair and calm down. They want comfort from their mother. They want the warmth of the hug and the gentleness of the kiss that will make them feel better.

What do we want when our lives have become mine fields of sins? What do we want when our sin have caused us problems with our friends and family? What do we want when we run to the Lord with our wounds so fresh and our tears not yet dry?

We don't want a Savior who tells us to try harder. We don't want a Savior who says, "I told you so." We don't want a Savior that tells us to sit and calm down. We want a Savior who comforts us.

And that is what our Savior brings. He brings us comfort, even though we have sinned and have the consequences in our lives. This comfort comes from a Savior who heals our wounds with his love and dries our tears with the news that, instead of giving us the eternal punishment that we deserve for our sins, we are forgiven of our sins. Our Savior gives us more than kisses to comfort us. He gives us great blessings. He gives us so much more in blessing than we will ever face in trouble and problem. Because he comforts us.

3-8

³ A voice of one calling in the desert, "Prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶ A voice says, "Cry out."

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them.

Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

When the construction on the Interstate began about 18 months ago, it didn't look like there was much of a plan. It looked a whole lot more like chaos. You couldn't really tell what was being built here, or what was planned for over there. There was simply a lot of people and earth movers and activity.

But now, things are taking shape. When you are caught in traffic, you can look over and almost see the plan taking shape in front of you. There is an access road here or a new exit there. It took time and people who knew what they were doing in order to bring order to the chaos.

Isaiah tells us that Jesus has come to bring order to the chaos of our sinful lives.

There is a wilderness in our hearts because of the sin which lives there. Our hearts are not civilized. It is full of the valleys of willful sins, the rough roads of our deceit, and the canyons of our own unbelief. It is a place of chaos. It is certainly not a place that is prepared to meet our Savior, Jesus, and to praise him for his salvation.

God sends his messengers out into the world with his Word. The Holy Spirit works through the Word that these prophets, apostles, pastors and teachers, believers of all kinds are preaching and teaching. The Holy Spirit becomes like the road crew on the Interstate, but instead of bringing order to the roads, the Holy Spirit brings the peace and order of faith to our hearts so full of sin.

The Holy Spirit reveals to us the glory of God, which is our Savior, Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who works through the Word to make our hearts places that are full of faith, ready to hear and believe in Jesus.

9-10

⁹ You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him.

See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

When we have good news we don't wait for anyone to ask. We tell them. We post it on facebook, we call people, it is the first thing we bring up in conversation. We would scream it from the mountaintops if we thought people would listen. We want people to know this good news because it is so important to us.

Jesus has come with good news. It is news for all to hear. He has come to tell the whole world that he is the promised Savior. He is the promised one of God who comes to bring peace through his saving work. This is good news for all to hear.

God has shared this good news through many people in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, he shared his good news of Jesus through prophets like Isaiah and their prophecies.

At the first Christmas he used angels to sing of the good tidings of great joy. He also used the shepherds who were overcome with happiness and told everyone what they had heard and seen about the Christ-child.

John the Baptist came as a witness to point the people to the good news that Jesus the Savior was here. He told the people that the one greater than he had come who would give the Holy Spirit to his people.

Jesus sent out the apostles to preach and teach to the people about what he had done. They went all over the world spreading the Good News of Jesus to Jew and Gentile.

Today, we have pastors and teachers today who publicly proclaim this same news to us.

But even if we did not have these people who went out to spread the good news in a public way, the good news of Jesus would still spread. It would spread because people like you and me love to tell others Good News and we have the best news. Jesus our Savior has come to save sinners like you and me.

This is the best news that should be shouted from the mountaintop, that should fill our posts on social media, that should dominate our conversations with family, friends and co-workers. Jesus come to save people like you and me. This is Good News worth shouting.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Jesus came to be more than a teacher or self-help guru. He came to be more a miracle worker or magician. Jesus came to seek and to save people all who are lost in their of sin and unbelief. Like a shepherd Jesus has come to search out those who need to be saved from these dangers. Jesus came to gather all who would believe in him, all his sheep and lambs to himself, so that he himself can tend his flock and keep them safe.

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus calls to us through his Word. He brings us close to himself through faith and keeps us in the faith our whole life. As the good shepherd, he cares about our daily needs as well. He provides us with the daily bread and blessings that we need to make it from one day to the next.

But more than just leading us to the quiet waters and the pleasant valleys of life, our shepherd also defends us when the enemy the devil comes prowling into our lives. He protects and preserves us from temptation and danger that would be too great for us. Our good shepherd is guiding us on the road that leads to heaven and he will surely be with us every step we take along the way.

We like to hear the forecast so that we are ready to face the day. God prepares for our salvation by showing us all that Jesus will bring for us and will do for us. This is part of our Advent preparation which we take part in every day of our life. We don't just prepare to meet a baby in the manger. We are prepared to meet a Savior from Sin and a Messiah who opens heaven to us. Lord help us to prepare our hearts and minds for all the great things that Jesus will do and has done for us. Amen